

THE SHEAF.

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DON QUIXOTE OF THE HAMPSHIRE LANES.

IT was hot June weather, but as I wandered along the deep lane, I could only see the eternal azure through a mist of green, and so I wandered cool and content; I felt at peace with the world, and the Dog was at peace with mankind; the rabbits had gone to sleep, and indeed everything but the butterflies and a few energetic brown birds had accompanied them to the pleasant land. The Dog mused on the slothfulness of rabbits, and his tail stuck out with the consciousness of superiority; yet his eyes were alight at every twist of the road, expectant of the fulfilment of his deferred desire—even a mole, he reflected philosophically, was better than nothing animate. My eyes, too, were alight with the hope of seeing something or somebody—Iseult perhaps, or a rare fritillary—I knew not which was more desirable.

Now we passed by the fringe of a beech-wood, and the atmosphere became tenser. The Dog looked up at me with interrogative ears—

“A possibility of sport, you think?”

He wagged his tail in the manner of a dog who knows.

“Too hot,” I objected, but his mind was already far away in the woodland.

Something flickered like a white flame in the bracken—he looked round to reassure me.

“Too far away,” I agreed, and leaving the wood (Venusberg to my Tannhauser dog) behind us, we reached the bottom of the road that leads up the high hill. We have only one high hill near us; hence the definite article.

The Dog looked at me. I looked at the Dog. And with the accord bred of long companionship, we simultaneously sat down—or rather the Dog collapsed into the long grass, whilst I, with a certain fastidiousness

due to an old-seated prejudice to insects, chose my seat more daintily. Yet daintiness did not beget originality, for it chanced to be nothing more out of the way than a moss-grown bank. Comfort is on occasions better than a marble monument.

Midsummer dreams caught me in their fair web, and I gazed along the white winding road pining for Iseult, or perhaps a rare fritillary. Suddenly where the white road joined the sky like a wave breaking foamily over a summer sea, a mounted figure leapt like a dolphin into human ken, and this visible object gave my imagination its much-needed hard food, as when in a sick-room a lonely watcher derives solace from the perigrinations of an insect crawling amid the monotonous herbage of the wall-paper. Could this be Iseult? Certainly it was no rare fritillary. At once my fancy curled smoke-like round the pictured glory of her form. Her robe should be amethyst-hued, stained deep with Tyrian dye: opals should lurk in the dark wonder of her hair, as luminous small clouds which herald the advent of the moon, and diamonds should girdle her waist as the night is girdled with stars. Alas! with propinquity came disillusionment dragging in the dust of reality, and my multitudinous-coloured visions faded before the compelling fact that the rider rode astride.

"Some farmer faring marketwards," I muttered gloomily, recognising the bathos of the situation, and seeing my faerie dreams merge in the unwieldy bulk and solid mass of colour which betrays the healthy yokel abroad, but thanks be to the unexpected, I found that closer propinquity lent a new enchantment, and incarnate oddity ambled into view with a wizened and peaked little man, grey-breeched, white-shirted, and with a tall silk hat which encased his narrow head as remorselessly as the aureole clings round the Madonnas of Crivelli. He bestrode a sleek chestnut pony; aslant his back a musket jogged like an unskilful rider on a jolting hack, while at his saddle bow half-a-dozen pairs of gaiters and half-a-

hundred sets of false teeth rattled with as grim a sound as the bones of Sintram's Grey Pilgrim. His belt bristled with fantastic daggers, spear-heads broken short at the haft, and vulgar little pen-knives.

"Some clever peddler" I thought, "tired of the prosy tray," but the purposeful look in the man's blue eyes seemed not set on money, and I willingly set aside the explanation as unworthy both of me and of him.

The soul of the Dog flew back to earth, and he rose from his emerald couch refreshed. Doubtless he had sent innumerable rabbits to cross the gloomy river of death, and galloped in a mad tilt across the asphodel fields of sleep.

"Now must I show myself in the dull part of a peace-maker, and sever the rope which makes the tug-of-war;" my hands sought in my pocket for the continent leash. But my fears rested on no solidier basis than an invariable precedent, and for the second time the unexpected happened, for the Dog advanced to meet the stranger, his tail wagging an almost emotional welcome. I saw that he recognised a kindred spirit, one with ideals, not identical perhaps, but still the unquestionable possessor of ideals. I was not to be outdone by a dog, at the game of courtesy, and "A fine day," quoth I. The stranger reined in his steed and "A passing fair day," he made answer. The deliberate archaism of the reply passed unnoticed at the moment.

"Will the morrow be so fair?" he queried with a straining glance towards the unfathomable azure. To babble of barometers would seem to savour almost of impertinence, but an allusion to the lofty flight of the swallows would set his mind at rest.

"I must travel leagues before sundown" he remarked as if to excuse the question, "and" with an apprehensive shiver "there is always rain now-a-days. Are you wandering in search of adventure?"

Here was the clue I wanted, and, thinking discretion the better part of

truth, I answered him with an affirmative nod.

"You would do well to watch the hedges at the entrance of the village yonder. They were stoning a sick dog" he muttered, "and at the end of it they stoned me. Yet" apologetically "I was bound to defend the weak and succour the helpless?"

"Without any doubt," I said decidedly.

"Ah! you understand, you understand," and his eyes caught the reflection of the sky, "I like dogs, you know. Have you ever noticed the look they have sometimes as if they were searching for something?"

"Often, and it is not always rabbits."

The Dog mouthed a yawn of congratulation, as if to express his appreciation of the fact that here was a very intelligent pair of fellows.

I had mentally christened my traveller Don Quixote of the Hampshire Lanes, and close on the heels of this summary baptism, his next query was more than apposite.

"Have you ever read about Don Quixote?" His eyes were bright with anticipation.

"Did you like him?" His eagerness was almost painful.

"I thought him a very noble gentleman."

"Ah! do you know I thought you would." He had long ago dropped his assumption of archaic speech. "I read about him last year, and I always wished to do as he did; he was such a splendid fellow. Yesterday my sister died, and was buried in the church-yard fifteen miles away. It's a pretty church-yard, and the sun sets behind the hill just over her grave. I have got nobody to think about now, and so I have determined to ride through the world like Don Quixote."

The loneliness of this mad wayfarer (the epithet fired my cheeks) filled me with the compassionate reverence with which we watch a marching tragedy. In his simplicity he was so far above the ordinary man; as the

possessor of it he was the friend of every brute save man, but the world would stamp him mad, and stone him, if not with missiles, with mocking words, harder perhaps for that gentle spirit to bear. I had not the heart to discourage him at this, the very beginning of his journey, but my mouth quivered at the thought of what might be the end of it.

"I think yours is a very wonderful resolve, and perhaps you'll excuse what, save in an admirer, would be mere inquisitiveness. Why do you carry those sets of false teeth across your saddle bow?"

"I was waiting for that," he murmured gleefully, "I knew you'd ask that soon, and of course it is a very natural question to ask. I expect you feel they look rather out of place, but I thought that if ever I happened to do battle with a particularly strong adversary, it might so easily end in my teeth getting knocked out by his lance, and it is impossible to buy decent helmets in this part of the country. Don Quixote was luckier than me—he had a whole suit of armour," this in a tone slightly tinged with regret. "But Sir Knight"—he stumbled—"Sir Knight of the Brown Dog, I give you good day. I must be about my business. There be, I doubt not, half a score virgins to save from death and worse, and as many recreant knights to force bite the dust, and it ill beseems me to dally here in idle chattering."

I was loth to part from him, and implored the favour of his name.

"I am the Lonely Knight of the White Road. My horse is called Rosinante out of compliment to the illustrious Don Quixote. My lady I have not yet found."

The purposeful look in his blue eyes gleamed stronger than ever.

And so we parted, I and my Don Quixote of the Hampshire Lanes. I watched his white shirt fading in to the mist of green till it seemed no more than the flicker of a rabbit's tail. Has he found his lady yet, that peaked little man? I have never met one whose white

soul showed itself so clear, and yet he was mad, and as such the most besotted policeman could detain him as a menace to the common welfare. Oh! but I hope he has found his lady.

The Dog stood at my side, and together we watched the road he had taken. Soon he stretched himself suggestively.

"You are right," I said, "the hill calls us, and" thought I viciously, "we will take our revenge for this afternoon's stones."

The Dog bristled and growled.

"Work to be done," I cried, "in God's name, let us do it," and I cut an ash plant from the hedge.

MONTAGUE COMPTON.

Montague Compton

SONNET.

TEACH me love's duties; is there yet a way
Wherein I still might serve thee, and untried?
Some task, by others shunned, wherein I may
Prove to the uttermost how deep, how wide
Is the heart's readiness, how purified
From selfish thoughts of fear. And see! I lay
Upon thy path a thing that shall abide—
Not the short service of an hour or day!
Even as an eagle soaring high among
Rough baffling winds, or with sweet fortitude
Hov'ring man's treacherous abodes above,
In anxious search of food for her loved young,
So would I dare, for thee, all dangers rude:—
Only ask not that I should cease to love.

MARY SCOTT.

“WHICH ?”

BEING A FABLE.

THE room was *her* sanctum: you could tell that the minute you entered it, for as was Yvonne, so was her room. Bathed in a rose light that softened the shadows, not made them, she sat. The room had a faint perfume that merely suggested itself, making one wonder if one had really smelt it, or only imagined it; and that is the duty of a perfume. Yvonne herself was thoroughly in keeping with the light and the perfume, in fact Yvonne was unimaginable without them, as she sat thinking.

Three men had made the discovery that she was the sort of light that their life needed, the sort of perfume their world must have. Three men all totally different in position, wealth, character, everything in short, except their unanimity in the respect of Yvonne. Having made the discovery, they being men and therefore greedy, each desired her single possession; a fact which troubled her, and was causing the pouting little frowns that chased each other over her face.

Being an original girl, that is to say having a large amount of common-sense, Yvonne had settled that she would decide their fate that night after a cosy little *diner a quatre* at Prince's. Never settle yourself for life, O young lady, with a man, until you have dined with him at a public restaurant, for there it is of all places that you will, if you watch, be able to see how he will go in harness, how many months or years it will be before he bores you to distraction. Watch a man order wine, for instance; mark how he walks into the glare of lights and the stare of eyes, and his breeding will be as the open day to you.

So she sat and pondered, with one small foot in the light of the fire, and you knew before even you looked that, being Yvonne's, her foot couldn't help being cased in a neat black velvet slipper and the daintiest of open-

works. A woman's character is always made plain by a glance at her feet and hands.

"Of course, Reggie is a dear boy, but he has not much money. I wonder why money was ever invented; probably to put a check on early marriages, and purchase Dukes for American daughters.

"Reggie is not handsome, of course, but he would hang for me if only I spun the rope. A poor man's slave or an old man's darling! That is rubbish pure and simple! It ought to have been the other way about, because you always have to carry about arrowroot, and fill hot-water bottles for the latter, whereas if you are discreet the former ought to be quite tame.

Here she glanced at her silver mirror, and if it could have spoken, it would have heartily agreed with the probability of the poor man's tameness. For Yvonne's face . . . well!

"Trevor has a certain amount of money, and he is ever so handsome—but there's the trouble! What's the use of sharing a husband, or having to keep him locked up? In the first case you don't get your money's worth, in the latter he is apt to get huffy. Besides he doesn't love me as much as Reggie does. Love dies, they say—well! anyhow, good looks do too. Trevor *would* look a duck, though, with iron-grey hair . . . but Reggie *does* love me.

"Then there's old Lord Millyons—he is a Cræsus. I wonder why old men are always Cræsuses—I suppose that is the plural: you say crocuses anyway. . . . I should have everything I wanted, and be 'milady' as well—'Lady Yvonne Millyons is staying at the Duke of Somewhere's: his lordship is taking the waters at Vatertrinkenstein.' . . . But he is odious, and he has at least one serious vice—he uses a tooth-pick. However, there's the title and—the money!

"Love, Beauty, Money! The eternal three, and the eternal task of

weighing them against each other! If Life were a game of Golf, how would it go? I'm a great believer in metaphor! Beauty would be the driver, but you can't play a round with a driver—Love, of course, is the putter because it gets one into holes, and also assists one to put the finishing touch on one's life. Money—well, money, I suppose, is the niblick, for it gets one out of the bunkers of adversity.

“Now, which is to be my club? Putter for Reggie, driver for Trevor, and his Lordship the niblick Well! I wonder!”

The door had opened: with the click of the handle Yvonne turned.

“Reggie!”

“Yes, Yvonne, I took the liberty! Oh! darling, I couldn't wait. All's fair in Love and . . .”

Do you wonder which she chose, and what the others said?

R. B.

POEM.

You scoffed at me when last we met,
Because, you said, I praised the Spring
In strains too high-fantastical—
Which none but crazy poets sing—

I longed to make you feel and see
That all the sky, and air, and earth
Were steeped in delicate delight,
And throbbing with the heart of mirth.

I longed for some magician's spell
To gather Nature's wonders up—
And to distill their essence rare,
Into a mystic sacred cup—

Which whoso drank would straight forget
All bitterness, distrust, and pain,
And, in the bliss of life renewed,
Would welcome youth and joy again.

Together then we might have slaked
The thirst of multitudes, who cry
For one small drop of extasy—
Yet thirst unheeded, till they die— — —

But *you*—you scoffed when last we met,
Because, you said, I praised the Spring
In strains too high-fantastical—
Which none but crazy poets sing.

RUTH HOLMES

ART AND HISTORY IN THE EAST END.

Spring, 1901.

I WENT down to take charge of a room at the Whitechapel Art Gallery for a couple of hours, feeling all the responsibility of one who was about to teach: for this short space at least, the untutored East-ender was to have the full benefit of a 'Varsity education. So I walked into the gallery allotted to me like a new master entering a strange class-room; but, like the new master, was uncomfortably shy at the start. However, after wandering round for a little while, and looking at the pictures myself, I began to think that I was wasting precious time: the work of educating the masses could be put off no longer, and I looked about me for a victim. In a corner of the room, which was given up almost entirely to English works, including many of the Pre-raphaelite school, there hung next to one another three portraits, a Lawrence, a Romney, and a Mdlle. Ledoux of the ultra-sentimental type, wherein a vapid young lady released a pet bird from its cage: before these stood an old man, upon whom I pounced as a likely subject. He was a Jew, unmistakably, Polish by preference: a grizzled beard came down over his dingy plaid neck-cloth and left its mark on a dingier brown over-coat several sizes too big for his short wizened body: his hat was a shapeless wonder; and he gazed with a seemingly vacant look at the canvasses before him.

I approached him in a friendly way, but he eyed me with suspicion; to disarm it I plunged at once and boldly *in medias res*, by remarking on the contrast between the three pictures, in point of style and sentiment, in what I hoped was an improving manner. He thawed.

"Ay, guv'nor" he said, "they are diff'rent: that un" and he pointed to the French horror, "that un's a picter, that is!"—I gasped; here was instruction thrown away indeed! "And this 'ere" after a pause came

Lawrence's turn, "is life!" In a flash I remembered what to him 'picter' connoted—the cheap lithograph and the coloured supplement—and acknowledged a Daniel: but more was to come, and Romney waited to be judged. "I'll tell you wot" went on the old man, in impressive jerks, "the man as did that, 'e knowed one thing, wotefer 'e was, 'e knowed 'ow ter mix 'is colours. There's a main lot in mixin' yer colours, an' not arf on 'em knows 'ow ter do that." He spoke sadly, with an almost professional regret, and I waited while he turned slowly about and took a comprehensive view of the whole room. 'La pia' caught his eye. "Now look at Rossetti; look at that feller Burne Jones," he said, "there yer are agin; they cudn't drawer figgers, not 'uman figgers—see 'er neck now,—but they *cud* drawer *lines*!"

I followed the critic, as with the same lost look he shuffled over towards the great Rossetti, and on the way passed two young costers, not your music-hall variety, but the genuine un-made-up coster, wrestling with an incomplete catalogue in front of a recent acquisition to the gallery.

"369," I heard one say, "'t'aint dahn 'ere, 'ere's 358 the larst:" and he turned in disgust from the faulty book to the picture of Joseph's coat being shown by his brethren to Jacob, "but I'll bet as it's Ford Madix Brahn's with thet there dawg in front, wotcher sye?" Needless to relate, he was correct.

A group of Jews, mostly talking Yiddish and so unintelligible to me, were gathered before Millais' 'Carpenter's Shop', discussing, as I understood from the few English remarks, the modern appearance of the tools: one, who had been studying a catalogue, suddenly pointed out a new figure of interest in Judas: "Dat's der bloke as gif 'im awye," I heard, and the technical question of the tools was forgotten.

'The Romans building Manchester' was also a favourite, for obvious reasons other than artistic: brick-laying as then practised won hearty

approval from qualified judges, who also quite appreciated the *corvée* system as enforced by the Roman army. "'Ow's that for the British workin' man?" chuckled a descendant of the naked savage with the mortar sack, "'Guess Tommy 'ad an easy time in those days!" And then a discussion began as to whether XX on the sacks of the legion had anything to do with beer.

At one end of the hall was a Burne-Jones cartoon for a stained-glass window—Solomon receiving from David the plans of the temple—and in front of it stood a man, who, when I approached, was apostrophising space. I don't know to what nationality he belonged, his speech did not betray that, though it seemed to show that he had indulged perhaps too freely; but his flow of words would have done credit to an Irishman and his gestures to an Italian; while he wore the goatee beard usually associated with our Yankee cousins. He welcomed me as an audience, clutched my arm, and pointed to the cartoon.

"An ter think" he exclaimed, "of a guv'mint spendin' forty thousan' pahnds on two young fules goin' torin' rahnd the world, when they can't even set up a moniment ter a man wot cud pint that! an' 'e's dead, 'e's dead, ain't 'e?" Evidently the thought of such intolerable injustice was too much for him, for after a moment he turned, still holding my arm, to where two pictures by Madox Brown represented two scenes in Cromwell's life. In the first, the farmer, not yet famous, rode slowly past a crackling fire of thorns, lost in deep thought upon the state of England: in the other, the grim Protector was dictating to his blind secretary the decree of the Vaudois. The sight brought fire into the eyes of my new friend. "Crumm'll!" he said in a tone of awestruck enthusiasm, "Crumm'll! ah, 'e was a *man*, 'e was! Tork abaht yer Parlimints an' yer Cahnty Cahncils! 'e 'ad a short wye wi' Parlimints, Crumm'll 'ad. 'Ave *you* ever 'eard abaht Crumm'll?"

I admitted that I had heard the name before, but invited confidences, for my pride of knowledge had evaporated long since, and I was eager to learn while I had the chance: but the invitation was unnecessary, for my informant hurried on, getting louder and more dramatic as he unfolded for my benefit a forgotten chapter in English history. "Why, 'e *went* ter Parliment, did Crumm'll, an' fer a 'ole week 'e listened to 'em, as they torked an' torked, sime as they do nah, an' at the end o' them fourteen dyes 'e sez—"Look 'ere, Mister Speaker," 'e sez, 'fer twenny-one long an' weary dyes I've sat an' listened to yer, an' there ain't nothink in it,' sez 'e: 'git aht,' 'e sez. An' the Speaker 'e ups an' 'e sez 'I ain't a-goin' ter git aht.' An' wot does Crumm'll do? 'E jist turns to 'is so'jers—"e allus 'ad 'is so'jers somewheres 'andy, 'ad Crumm'll, an' 'Carry 'im' 'e sez, 'carry 'im.' Ow, 'e knowed the wye ter work wi' yer parlimints an' yer obstructions, an' all thet sorter 'umbug!"

"Well then, what would he do with the Irish party now-a-days?" I asked; for if this were ancient history, what might not modern be? "Would he carry them out?"

"Carry 'em?" in a tone of utter scorn, "why, they wouldn't *wite* fer 'im: they'd walk aht: soon as they seed 'im comin' in this wye, they'd be goin' aht thet wye, all o' their own accord like, not 'arf, they would'nt!"

"And what about the Liberals?" I enquired.

"'E'd *kick* them aht," he said with conviction.

"Then only the Tories would be left?"

"Yus, yer bet they would, an' there'd be some more o' the Whitehallin' business fer them! Ow Crumm'll, Crumm'll," (this foe to all parties grew more violent) "we want yer back ag'in, Crumm'll, ye're wanted nah, yer are thet, ow Crumm'll, Crumm'll!—"

And when at that moment the policeman appeared in answer, and saw him safely down the stairs, he was still calling loudly on his hero.

C. L. W.

A FRAGMENT OF DREAM.

AND while I wondered what great cruelty was preparing, or for whom was ordained this pit of torment, suddenly I knew that it was I who was to be tortured.

Round me rose, tier above tier, a vast amphitheatre thronged with pitiless faces. I stood in the centre, alone; unfettered, yet as powerless as if my limbs had been loaded with chains. For all round me, still distant, but ever closing in upon me, was a creeping ring of fire, of hungry, smokeless flame, licking up, with little leaps and flares, some oozy combustible which covered the sand-floor right up to my very feet.

It was drawing nearer. At first I had been hardly aware of any warmth in the air; but now I began to feel the hot, cruel flame-wind, as the draughts of the open amphitheatre blew the flame towards me from one side or the other.

It was drawing nearer. There was no merciful, stupefying smoke that might stifle me before the flames could reach me; but a horrible, choking, stinging air, that parched and vexed and maddened me.

It was drawing nearer. Some sudden draught, greater than ordinary, drove the thin flames from one side so fiercely towards me, that for an instant I felt the scorch, the withering agony of the fire-touch; and the moment when it ceased seemed as a moment of Paradise, so infinite was the relief.

It was drawing nearer. And already I knew what would be the torture; and in extreme anguish of this foretaste, I lifted my eyes to the calm, wide blue above, and prayed.

And lo! I felt a sudden lifting. My feet were lightened, and clung no more like lead to the ground. For, of the infinite mercy of Heaven, in this last hour of my need, wings of a great angel were given to me; and gently, slowly, as a sea-bird rises before a toppling wave-crest, I rose and floated and soared, beyond the reach of the baffled flames, above the heads of the disappointed gazers, up and up and up. . . .

F. W. BOURDILLON.

LONDON CLAY.

IMPASSIONED Singer, Amorist divine,
The dædal Earth—whene'er thy lay benign
Thrills her old veins—almost forgets the tears
Out-poured upon her breast like bitter wine.

The footprints of irrevocable years,
The fleeting vows, frail hopes and phantom fears,
Fade nigh away dost thou, sweet Lark, aspire
To join the choral music of the spheres;

Who ever climbest upwards from the mire
As if to melt within the central fire;
Or swingest oft, a censer i' the blue,
All Nature ringing with thy heart's desire.

And once a mighty Seer woke a-new
His harp, entwined with asphodel and rue,
Whose magic strains o'er-match thine ecstasy—
Thy brother-bird in Tuscany to woo.

But I have marked thee rear from nest to sky
The lyric ladder of thy minstrelsy;
Have known thee crown with joy thy tender spouse,
While flinging to the stars a golden cry—

Above yon spectral trees, whose dreaming boughs
An eager shout of boys may scarce arouse ;
When mimic warfare all the winter wild
With sudden echo wood and grove endows.

Should fragrant Summer come, with aspect mild,
To dance athwart the land—a fairy child ;
Through these melodious meadows lightly fare
Blithe bathers thence on jocund noons beguiled.

So erst he haply sought on mornings rare
Though chained to earth, like thee, the ambient air,
And rode unscathed the whirlwind at his will—
A Satyr's foot, Apollo's brow who bare ;

Yet loved in boyhood well our ancient Hill—
Whose bowers, perchance, with gentle visions fill
The dying eyes on Hellas holy strand :
His mother Ida hymns her Poet still.

19. *April.*

A. R. BAYLEY.

THE POTTER.

OUTSIDE the streams of Life ran strong,
Outside the sky He gave shone bright,
Outside love's scents were borne along,
The thousand fires of Youth alight,
Rosy-red, alight!

Within the Potter sat alone,
And deftly to His thumb each shape
Flew willing, as His touch 'twould own!
There lay the Pots in rows agape,
Grinning wide agape!

Then took the Potter two to try,
And pondered He; then made them one!
Two pots of clay—just you and I—
He joined them till their work be done,
Life's long work be done!

“Oh! Potter, sitting there away,
Whence flow the streams of Life to Earth,
Knead firm and strong these Pots of Clay
Fast with the love that had its birth,
From Thy hands its birth!”

Thus made I pray'r; and past the gates
Of Dreams went forth into the Day
Out on the Plains where Life awaits,
Out on the misty Future's way,
Mist-clad blind-fold way!

ROLAND BRADDELL.

THE SLEEP OF DEATH.

Atque hoc sollicitum vince sopore caput.

Propertius.

THE day closes, the day closes,
Sing us to sleep:
Farewell roses, roses,
Nor let us weep.
Our life's bells echo still,
Yet hollow sound and chill:
Not as they used with clangour forth to leap.

We have gone by together,
Love, youth, and I,
Farewell to stormy weather,
Farewell, we cry.
Nought is there left but sleep,
Fled is delight: why weep?
The end, the honeyed rest, the end is nigh.

The dreams, the dreams
Of days gone by,
Faint gleams, yet gleams
Of suns that die
Scented and sweet grow dim,
Like as the boatman's hymn
Across the twilight streams; nay do not sigh.

MAURICE WOODS.

A WINTER'S NIGHT-MARE,

Edited by GRAHAM HOPE,

Author of "A Cardinal and his Conscience."

WHILE staying in an old country house, I found some faded yellow leaves. I deciphered their faint writing with growing interest, for I soon discovered it to have an important bearing on a well-known literary controversy. The writer was evidently a woman of great mental capacity, but the manuscript was too long to publish in its entirety. I have therefore ventured to condense it into narrative form, reproducing the conversations only.

SCENE II. ACT 3.

Catherine. "Thou hast forgotten that we have a Queen

Whose woman's heart is ever open'd

To listen to the tale of women's wrongs."

Big Peter, (roughly). "Quean me no queens! Thou art a quean thyself."

Catherine, (with marvellous self-command). "'Twere better to be falsely
called a quean,

Than to be such a treacherous, base cozen as thou!"

Peter, (brutally). "Nay, if the cozen were the cousin of a queen

'Twere better to be the cozen than the quean."

Catherine, (coldly). "A sorry knave, thou hast a sorry wit."

Peter, (with false friendliness). "My wit is sorry, for thy tongue is sharp."

* * * * *

The authoress flung down her pen. She was as young and beautiful as any of Miss Marie Corelli's heroines, and twice as conscious of her rare genius. Not without reason either, for if we may accept her unsupported word, her plays rank as the master-pieces of the world's literature. Yet

she complains that she was most unhappy, suffering not only in her own person, but as the representative of her sex, whose wrongs lay ever heavy on her soul.

Now we will let her tell her story herself in her own way.

She rose, pushing aside her weight of golden hair. (I don't quite understand this phrase, unless she wore a wig, but I have seen something like it in other stories, so it may pass). She paced the room restlessly like a beautiful caged creature. Her mind felt confined as well as her body; it was suffering from the narrow limits of time and space.

"Ah me! Why was I born in these cramped days, when my soul is not free to expand as it would! My play—the most precious part of me—is stunted in its growth by outward circumstances. Catherine should be as witty as she is wronged, yet I can find no answer sharp enough for that great hulking brute, Petrucchio. A man should never be allowed the best of the war of words; the woman should always score most heavily. Yet I feel that she, who shall have the gift of brilliant epigram or sparkling repartee, will waste it in making her men as witty as her wives. So that none shall guess which speaks, for all will shine alike."

(This seems a prophecy of one of our best-known living authors, and shows that the fair dramatist was in very truth a seer).

She next describes how, gazing from the window of her upper chamber, her glance fell on the form of her husband, lounging outside the tavern door, and drinking with one of his boon companions.

"Alas!" she sighed, "Why am I mated with a clown? This low-born peasant offends my every sense. Yet I have striven long with gentle patience to raise him from his sottish ignorance. In vain! I weaned him from the evil ways of a poacher, but he took to a profession hardly less degraded. He is a common mummer, strutting in borrowed finery upon the stage. And I am of more than noble birth, learned in all the

wisdom of the ancients, and full of genius. Ah me ! ”

She then goes on to picture a scene too painful to dwell upon, when her husband came up, and spoke to her with affected friendliness. She says that she shrank in loathing from his rough caress, reminding him that it would be better for him to prove his love before speaking of it. Her words had some effect, for he stood staring dumbly at her ; stricken, she hoped, by a new sense of remorse, or only rendered more stupid than usual by his recent potations.

“You do not answer,” she said disdainfully. “You cannot. Full well you know that I ask but one proof of your much talked of affection ; and you refuse it.”

“I would not deny you anything that I could give.”

“Words, mere words ! This boon lies within your power to grant, and you withhold it. Are you not the chief actor at the ‘Globe’ ? ”

“But—”

“There were no buts, an you loved me.”

Again he stood silent in clownish perplexity. She describes her growing irritation at his dulness. It was more than her highly-strung, artistic temperament could bear with patience. She longed to beat him with her little hands ; yet her pride restrained her. She knew that he would bear her blows with the contemptuous indifference of a strong man for a feeble woman. She is very pathetic on this point ; but something like what she says can be found in the writings of many women who have the cause of their sex as much at heart as she had.

“Why will you not act my plays ? Can you not speak openly for once ? ”

“Well, sweet heart—”

“Why use such silly words ? Speak quickly ! Your long delays would ruffle the evenest temper.”

“It seems scarce easy to finish what I begin to say.”

"Doubtless you would imply that I have interrupted you; but I am resolved to keep silence. Nothing shall goad me to break it."

"I was trying to explain that it is not wholly my fault. The others of my company do not love your plays."

"Why not? What fault have they to find in my work?"

"Harry likes not the part of injured wife. Your men are too brutal to their wives to please the poor lads who have to act the suffering heroines."

"There's a true man! Yet I wager he will show scant pity to his own poor wife when he shall have one."

Again a silence rose like a wall between them.

"Is that all you have to urge? You can not let the children of my brain have life upon your stage, because Master Harry fears a bruise or two at your hands, if you act with spirit."

"There are other difficulties. It is unwise to put things so baldly. The subjects you choose are better taken for granted than discussed in open day."

"I suspected that lay behind your hesitancy. Men are so cowardly. You prefer to shut your eyes to evil. When I see it, I must denounce it loudly; and, in denouncing, make it horrible. I have a mission to the world, and I must speak or die. If men heard my voice they would turn in loathing from their vulgar sins—"

"Or leave the 'Globe' empty."

"How petty your selfish considerations seem to me! Your only care is how to fill your theatre, while my one thought is how to save the world."

"There is less difference between us than you think."

"What mean you?"

"If I keep an audience I save the 'Globe' if not the world."

"A sorry knave with but a sorry wit."

"Nay, do not be so angry with my jest. In truth, I hold that more good is done by making virtue beautiful than by dwelling on the ugliness of

sin. Besides, if your plays scare the men away, they would not profit, after all, by your teaching."

"Why harp longer on this painful string? Excuses are but wordy proofs of your unwillingness to act. The devil can always find a reason for not doing good."

"If you would have a little patience—"

She says that then she interrupted with a scornful laugh. It was too absurd to suggest that she was ever aught save most meekly patient and long-suffering.

"I would fain ask your help. For I have written a few dramas, too, and we might work together."

It was at that moment that suspicion stung her to the soul. Hitherto she had heard vague rumours of new plays at the 'Globe', but had not guessed how greatly they might interest her. Now she listened—her face masked in icy reserve—while he talked on. Yes! They were hers! He had stolen them from his own wife.

"I shall take them in a few days to a friendly printer, one Isaac Jaggard; who will do the work moderately well, and not ask too great a price. Ah! the church clock strikes. I must get me hence to the 'Globe'. Farewell, sweet Anne."

He went, and she was alone at last to brood over her great sorrow. He had stolen her children from her, and changed them out of all resemblance. Only her mother's heart could recognize them still, dwarfed and disfigured. Only her quick woman's wit had led her to pierce through her husband's clumsy affectation of kindly confidence to the base treachery beneath. What could she do? If she claimed them, he would deny that they were hers. He had altered them so cunningly that she could prove nothing.

The cruelty of this, added to her other wrongs, overcame her; and she wept. The hot tears cleansed her pale cheeks from the pollution of his

farewell kiss. (Again, you will notice, she was in advance of her time, for this sort of phrase often appears in the purposeful fiction already alluded to). It was thus that she was found a few minutes later by her sole friend and trusted adviser, the great lawyer who paid reverent court to her supreme genius. (She is very careful that there should be no mistake on this point. It was no vulgar intrigue, but a friendship after the manner of Plato).

"What ails thee, my fair mistress? Why these priceless pearls falling untreasured from thy lovely eyes?"

"Ah me! I weep because I am a woman, Francis."

"Yet that is wont to be thy chiefest pride."

"I shame my sex by pitiful cowardice."

"Nay, now I swear thou hast the bravest soul."

His sweet words cheered her. She was hungry for appreciation. Her greatest grief was feeling that no one could understand her moods.

"It is my plays—"

"Does that base churl, thy husband, still refuse to act them?"

"Worse than that."

"Worse? Has he destroyed them?"

"Better that a thousand-fold."

"Thou dost alarm me, sweeting! What were worse?"

"He has stolen them."

"I pray thee, do not weep. I fain would share thy grief and lighten it; but as yet my dull wit does not grasp thy meaning."

"He has put them on the stage as his, and so disfigured that even thou might'st see them without knowing they were mine."

"Incredible!"

"'Tis a most evil fact."

"Which has he taken?"

"All, I fear, but as yet I only know of one. Thou wilt remember how I

took those few, bald words from Dante, weaving them into a great and subtle tragedy? 'The Fair Frances and Paul of Rimini', I named it. There was a world of power and horror in my pages that made the original seem poor and pale by contrast."

"I can ne'er forget it. What fate befell?"

"My husband took it, changed its name and very nature, substituting the calf-love of a shallow girl for the devouring passion of a much-wronged woman. He called Paul, Romeo, and the fair Frances, Juliet!"

"False traitor! How I pity thee, sweet Anne!"

"Yet worse remains. He takes his plays tomorrow—his plays that once were mine—to a hireling printer who will give them to the world under his name; and he will reap the glory due to me."

"This is a serious matter. Hast thou proof?"

"Aye, proof enough to brand him as a thief. Thou knowest that he comes of peasant stock, and is all unlearned in antiquity. How could such as he write plays, not having read the works of Aristotle, and being ignorant of the unities?"

"True, ah! most true! But your clear reasoning would not avail in law."

"Canst find no other way by which to right my wrongs?"

"I could do something."

"Speak quickly. Let your words relieve my pain. I feel a mother mourning for her babes."

"I have a cipher curious and hard to read. What if I were to introduce it in the plays to prove your claim to them before the world?"

"Good! But have a care! William is hasty and heavy-handed in his cups. It were not well to rashly anger him."

"Courage, fair mistress, he shall never know. My device is too subtly intricate for his clumsy wit. But, to make safer, none shall have the key, not even thou."

"A thousand thanks! Now I can breathe again. If it be secret, I will tell my tale trustfully to your ears. Know, then, that I am not lowly born as William is, but more than nobly. I had a Royal mère."

Sir Francis started. He had heard somewhat of a secret marriage between the Queen and her unworthy favourite. An evil light shone in his eyes, and he touched his cheek, which was yet tingling from the hand of Majesty. (This was noted by Anne, but as of little special significance).

"Yes, it was she who opened the Gates of Life to me this time; but I am immortal like my genius. In ancient days my Muse charmed the Greek world."

"Great Sappho! How my heart rejoices to have known you!"

"No, not her. She was too vulgarly notorious; besides, her silly love-affair degrades her in my eyes. I had a far smaller circle of select admirers. I was Erinna!"

(Sir Francis seems to have made no comment. Possibly he failed to remember the rare instances in which the lady was mentioned by her contemporaries).

"Erinna!" she pursued. "In days to come Ireland will creep from under England's heel, and stand up conscious of her cruel wrongs. Then the voice of her wild wailing shall unite with mine, sounding more shrilly than that of any woman."

"Wilt thou return again to this low world? And shall I not be near to aid thee?"

"I will return; but thou wilt be ever with me, growing nearer to my soul until the barrier of sex be broken down at last, and thou shalt worship at the Bodley Head."

"Thy words are dark to me. Bodley is but our Minister abroad. Why should I bow before him?"

"Have patience, gentle friend. I know not what I mean when my

tongue utters mystic prophecies. Thou shalt have the gift when thou art decadent. Words and words and words shall issue from thy lips, beautiful exceedingly, but none may guess their meaning, thyself least of all."

* * * * *

The fragment ends abruptly, and would seem valueless as well as incomprehensible, had not the patient labour of Mrs. Gallup given us a clue. The key to the secret cipher has been discovered by her after a long and arduous search. Alas! it reveals the character of Sir Francis Bacon in an even darker light. He must have betrayed Anne Hathaway as he betrayed so many others. Her name is never mentioned, and he takes the sole credit of the plays, besides claiming her "Royal mère" It is sad, but I dare not doubt the authenticity of this fragment, found in a second-best four-post bed, which may have been the one mentioned in Shakespeare's will.

Yet one idea occurs to me. It is so bold that I hardly dare to suggest it, and only add it here with the utmost deference and humility. The specimen given of Anne Hathaway's work does not, in my poor judgment, compare favourably with the works which are familiar to us all. Is it possible that she erred? Can a woman be jealous of a mere man? If so, did jealousy mislead her; and may it be, that the famous plays were written, after all, by William Shakespeare?

OF THY FORGIVENESS—

WHEN I had walked, away from thee,
Until my feet were sore
And I stood still—
The thought of thy forgiveness was my balm.

When I had wept, away from thee,
Until mine eyes were dark
And I returned—
The smile of thy forgiveness was my light.

When wild remorse unravelled me
Before I fell asleep,
And I recalled—
The word of thy forgiveness was my peace.

I start up in the night, ah me!
Surrounded by thine arms—
But woe is me!
The *touch* of thy forgiveness was my dream.

E. LORRAINE.

A CALL.

OH, mournful dwellers in rows of sordid numbered tenements; you who live without Beauty in your ranks of unhomelike homes; pitiable in your decorations and imitations of sweet inimitable nature; ah, leave them all: come, come, away, away; leave dusty, strait, mean city ways, leave money-getting; come in sandals, come in flowered gowns, in kirtles and wimples, in fluttering scarves; come in smocks, in broad hats of plaited reeds; make yourselves beautiful and come, nay, hasten, for I must lead you to a dream-like land. There you shall kneel in the Sanctuary of Loveliness, and drink at the Fountain of Truth, bathing your tired eyes in the pure waters, and arise, seeing.

It is a cool, green boscage—no forest—a little grove, with branching glades, narrow avenues, winding aisles, and cloisters between living pillars, green tapestry of low-trailing tendrils, velvet carpets of moss, sedilias of brown roots, and all roofed by myriads of celestial leaves, spaced with blue Heaven. Here is the Vision of Life.

All here is young, fresh, new in its ancient sequence of ever-returning Spring. Faultless babe-life of bud and leaf, perfect births, heavenly beginnings, marvellous appearings of blade and shoot and openings of folded fern; movements in the rich soil of humble sleepers awakening; sound of rippling water, "like silver curtains drawn on tinkling rings"; ecstatic voices of wedded birds, constellations of white wind-flowers.

Put your shoes from off your feet, fling away your cares of sooty wharf and dingy counting-house, of money and of the fashion of the world. Erase from the tablets of your hearts all that cannot be spelled or lisped by wood-land signs and sounds; come and buy what money will not get: blessed simplicity, pure unworldliness, sweet orderly living. Here make

your tabernacles of green boughs, thatch your homesteads with golden straw, that you and the joyous birds may house together. Let the glorious Sun awaken you, and go to rest when he bids. For your daily work, be God's gardeners; for food, eat of the fruits of the bounteous earth; for clothing, dress yourselves as the flowers, or spin your coat from the fleece of yon white infant lamb; for wisdom, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow."

These for your happy life; for death, lie down in peace: the woodland robins will cover you with leaves.

MARGOT DANIEL.

LE STRYGE : Chimère de Notre Dame.

DEMON, who dost o'er-look in baleful trance
Thy gay unageing city, year by year;
Counting her crooked alleys disappear
That darkling drank the tragic tears of France:
Her riven banners; her victorious lance;
Her wit, than steel more keen, out-casting fear;
Her passionate pride that Time can never sear—
They fade or flower in life's eternal dance:

Beneath thy sneer men creep like summer flies;
A later Abélard, a Villon this
To steal a purse or maid's love while he sings
Or pawn the world and manhood for a kiss:
Mocking, with tongue out-thrust, love's last disguise—
Bound to thy mighty Church—thou yet hast wings!

A. R. BAYLEY.

SALUTARIS HOSTIA.

IN an hour of sorrow when Hope lay dead,
And Love of a deep wound dying,
I wandered alone where a wood-way led
From the ways of laughing and lying.

The flowers around me had pitying eyes,
The leaves were as hands caressing;
But the fierce despair in me bade despise
And spurn the appointed blessing.

Till lo, from her leafy hermitage
Of the hazel bending over,
A primrose looked to rebuke my rage;
And I, the primrose-lover,

Smote, with a cruel foot, on the face;
Was it not but a flower there lying?
Nay, as I turned, me-thought the grace
Of an angel lay a-dying.

And a storm of penitence shook my soul,
My tears on the dead flower raining;
And lo, on a sudden I knew the whole,
And deep peace followed the paining.

Vain the strength of an angel were,
Or the tender love of a flower,
To turn the sinner from sin, or tear
The damned from the Devil's power.

'Twas the Lord Himself who had died again ;
And I knew, with a heart thrice riven,
I had betrayed him, denied, and slain,
And I, ev'n I, was forgiven.

F. W. BOURDILLON.

SOMETIME IN SEPTEMBER.

HAND in hand on a milky autumn morning,
Along the emerald path that threads the amber corn,
Hand in hand together, Love riding on a sunbeam,
Love rides with us and leaves the world forlorn,
You and I, my dearest, and a few blue flowers.
Watch by the style the glory of the pearl
Turning to opal, and all the world before us
Sings to me of you, my wild rose girl.

In the old grey church-yard over the hill-side,
Lavender and laurel, rosemary and rue
Bow as we pass them, glad that we are lovers,
And a robin in a thorn-bush sings to them of you.
Sweet, sad lavender, forgotten in the summer,
In the winter you tell us of the summer that is dead :
Yours is the fragrance of some fair old story
Of things that happened when the roses were red.

White are the candles flickering on the altar,
Whiter the anemonies gathered for the feast,
Whitest of all is your soul, my dear one,
And the light in your eyes dims the window in the East,
Out in the church-yard the robin still is singing,
Here in the church, will you pray your prayer for me,
Will you pray for the souls of the world's dead lovers?
Remember the wind and their longing to be free.

Down through the meadow, past the pollard willows,
Nodding to themselves in their mirror the stream,
Starry is the grass with the kisses of the moonshine,
The far-off kisses of a world's faint dream!
Ah! my sweet, when your image broke upon me,
Stood I bewildered, weary of the night,
Your image broke upon me like dawn upon a garden,
Exquisite and cool as the coming of the light.

MONTAGUE COMPTON.

Montague Compton

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Others are

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